

SPOKE

Conestoga College, Kitchener

MARCH 13, 2000

What's Inside



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Students fume over gas prices

College denied SuperBuild funds

By Laura Czekaj

Conestoga College is not among the 35 colleges and universities to receive money from the provincial government's SuperBuild Growth Fund.

The announcement was made at a press conference Feb. 24 at the University of Waterloo.

The announcement comes as a blow to the college, said Conestoga president John Tibbits, because it doesn't seem to make sense.

"It's a total shock," he said. "We thought the worst that could happen was that we would get only half or two-thirds of the money. We never imagined that we would get nothing."

Conestoga's proposal requested \$39 million from the fund, which was allotted for a \$66-million project to build a second campus in Waterloo located on property owned by the City of Waterloo beside Waterloo's Millennium Recreation Project on University Avenue East.

The campus would allow growth in programs like information technology, engineering, communications, nursing and emergency services including a

degree program in nursing offered with McMaster University in Hamilton.

The SuperBuild Growth Fund, which held \$742 million in its coffers, was established by the provincial government in an effort to modernize and build post-secondary institutions, as well as improve education and

funding may mean the province will make it up to the college later by granting the college applied degree status.

"It makes no sense unless they had another plan for Conestoga," he said. "I've got to think that somehow we are going to get something in the near future."

Another college that received

would include skills training labs at their main campus.

Rundle said Fanshawe wasn't given any funding because their proposal was more expensive than the other colleges' proposals.

The big question seems to be how some colleges' proposals like Fanshawe's and Conestoga's fail to meet the requirements set by the government to achieve funding and why other colleges, like Centennial, received funding.

According to Tibbits, Centennial's application rates are down 10 per cent this year compared to last year, while Conestoga's applications are at a higher rate than any other college at seven per cent.

Centennial is planning to use the funding to grow by 4,300 students, but with their applications in decline, Tibbits can't understand where they expect to get the students.

Dave Ross, spokesman for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, said the proposals that gained funding were chosen by the government on the basis that they were more competitive and more closely met the criteria than the other proposals that weren't selected.

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"It's a total shock. We thought the worst thing that could happen was that we would only get half or two-thirds of the money."

John Tibbits,

Conestoga College president

meet increased student demand.

Tibbits was warned Feb. 23 by assistant deputy minister David Trick that Conestoga had not received funding. However, Tibbits said the minister did indicate to him that significant funding would be available in the system in the near future for those colleges who had good projects and community support.

Tibbits said he thinks the lack of

nothing from the fund is Fanshawe College in London. The president of Fanshawe, Dr. Howard Rundle, says he was shocked and dismayed at the oversight.

"Fanshawe is currently full," he said. "Students wanting a college education will have to go elsewhere."

Fanshawe had planned to use the money from the fund to add two additional buildings that

Priority: freeze tuition

By Ray Bowe

The Doon Student Association and the Ontario Community College Student Parliamentary Association are urging students to voice their concerns regarding climbing tuition costs.

Mike Harris, DSA vice-president of education, said he has sent out e-mails to members of the legislature about setting up an open forum at Conestoga. Although most of them have not responded yet, Kitchener Centre MPP Wayne Wettlaufer has responded to Harris's query, saying he would be interested in such an endeavour.

Harris said students should not wait for an organized symposium and urged students to take it upon themselves to contact their local MPP about the rising costs of tuition and what is being done to stop it.

Harris was still waiting to hear from Cambridge MPP Gerry Martinuk, Kitchener-Waterloo MPP Elizabeth Witmer and Waterloo-Wellington MPP Ted Arnott.

According to a Feb. 14 press release, OCCSPA has asked student governments to invite their students to contact their local MPPs about how college educa-

tion can be ensured.

The DSA and OCCSPA say college tuition fees have increased 109 per cent between 1990 and 1999. Also, in the academic year 1996-97, 38 per cent of the entire college system's revenue came from tuition fees, support funds, investments and donations. That figure is up from 23 per cent in 1990-91.

While college enrolment is increasing, government operating expenditures are steadily falling, inevitably forcing community colleges to raise tuition rates, said OCCSPA. If operating costs were levelled out and sustained, there would be a possibility of freezing tuition rates.

OCCSPA has asked student governments to provide contact information for local MPPs to ask for an increase to operating costs to enable a tuition freeze.

OCCSPA said student leaders are supposed to be setting up meetings with local MPPs to discuss public funding, tuition levels, student debt and related topics, with hopes that Premier Mike Harris and Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Dianne Cunningham can find pragmatic and fair solutions to the concerns of Ontario students.

Watch out for the plate!!



Kathy Best enjoys a slice of pizza at Jack Astor's during the Grub Crawl Feb. 24. For the full story, see page 6.

(Photo by Sherri Osment)

More money to students

By Tannis Fenton

The provincial government announced a \$40-million increase in secondary and elementary school special education funding Jan. 27.

Dale Leckie, an executive assistant with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, said the money will be allocated to individual student and intensive support allowances.

The intensive support allowance, whose funding has been frozen since the 1998/1999 school year, involves an individual education plan, which includes psycho-educational testing, assessments and regulates the appropriate intervals of testing for special needs students.

The intensive support allowance will have an automated and streamlined claim process, which will increase the number of successful claims by approximately \$40 million, he said.

Rick Casey, a secondary school transition counsellor with Conestoga College's special needs services, said he hopes the money will increase the number and frequency of psycho-educational assessments done on secondary school students with specific learning disabilities.

Such assessments are required in

order for Conestoga College students to be properly accommodated by special needs services or the learning opportunities project, a provincial project implemented in September 1998 to better help learning disabled students in post-secondary institutions, said Casey.

He added the college requires psycho-educational assessments, which identify students with specific learning disabilities, be done within the last three years in order to effectively accommodate the student.

There have been problems getting up-to-date assessments because school boards have had their resources cut so deeply and have lost their board psychologists, Casey said.

According to a Jan. 27 Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation press release, education funding has been cut \$1 billion since 1995.

The \$40-million increase, which won't be allocated to school boards until September 2000, could benefit learning disabled students and staff at Conestoga College if money is given to assessments, said Casey.

"I see several benefits if students with specific learning disabilities received comprehensive and timely assessments," Casey said. "In terms of the student, it would

ensure that those with specific learning disabilities were being accommodated to their level of need in elementary and secondary school.

"I believe as a result, these students would achieve their potential in terms of grades."

Casey said students with specific learning disabilities would be better able to compete with non-disabled students as they meet academic entrance requirements for post-secondary study.

Students would come to Conestoga College already informed of their strengths and weaknesses, Casey said.

The college could implement accommodations that are more reflective of their individual need, he said, adding that students could better self-advocate their learning needs to teachers.

"Selfishly for (the special needs) department, we would not need to be doing the excessive amount of assessments that we are currently confronted with," Casey said.

Having up-to-date psycho-educational assessments would save students and the college time and money, he said.

"It would further reduce the time placed on our department to secure funding and services to complete full scale psycho-educational assessments," Casey said.

Snub by government 'a total shock'

Continued from page one...

He said that is the reason why both the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University were given money, even though they are both located in the same area as Conestoga.

Ross's explanation of why Conestoga was left out in the cold only angers Tibbits.

"The explanation we got as to why our proposal didn't succeed only left me more angry," said Tibbits. "It is quite clear that the process is highly flawed."

The community seems to agree with Tibbits because he said the college has received an outpouring of support, both from businesses and from the public.

"It's going to have a bigger impact on the community than it will at Conestoga," said Tibbits. "As this area grows and with the double-cohort issue it's going to be harder and harder for young people to get into this college."

The double cohort is an influx of graduates from high school that will result the year both Grade 12 and OAC students graduate because of secondary school reform.

Tibbits also said he finds the announcement unbelievable because Waterloo Region has the second fastest demographic growth in Ontario. The economy in the region is booming and there is a skills shortage which Conestoga can provide relief for.

"I guarantee you that this will become a community issue," he said. "I think people will get upset about this unless something happens."

Local MPPs also voiced their support during a Feb. 29 meeting with Tibbits at Queen's Park.

Ted Arnott, MPP for Waterloo-Wellington, said he can't understand why Conestoga was not recognized by the provincial government since Conestoga ranked number 1 in the Key Performance Indicators surveys last year.

The annual survey of Ontario's 25 community colleges establishes accountability and excellence benchmarks regarding programs, faculty, services and facilities.

The 1999 survey ranked Conestoga number 1 in overall quality of facilities and resources, overall quality of services, graduate placement rates and graduate satisfaction.

"On that basis alone you would think that the provincial government would want to fund Conestoga," he said during a recent interview. "I hope that working together we can find what other opportunities exist for Conestoga College."

Arnott said as a result of the meeting with Tibbits, other MPPs will be involved and Arnott has called the minister of finance to express his view that Conestoga should be given other funding opportunities.

Without the funding, Conestoga's attempt at growth is impossible, because the college will not be able to move ahead with the second Waterloo campus unless it can find substantial financial backing, said Tibbits.

Correction

In the March 6 edition Dave Longarini's photo that accompanied the Condors end of season report card was replaced by another player's photo. Spoke wishes to apologize for the error

Healthy eating...
regular physical
activity

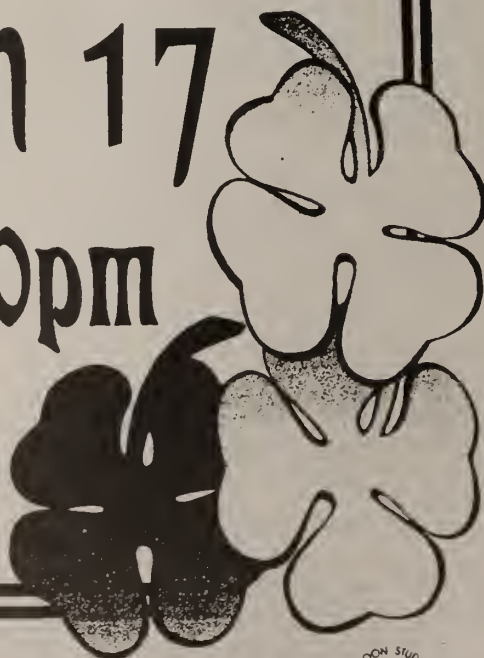


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8

Sign up at DSA office



Melissa Turner (left) accepts a cheque for peer tutoring from the DSA's Jenn Hussey on Feb. 17. (Photo by Ray Bowe)

Peer tutoring gets \$3,000 DSA donation

By Ray Bowe

The Doon Student Association presented its annual allotment to peer tutoring services on Feb. 17.

DSA vice-president of operations Jenn Hussey presented \$3,000 to peer services administrator Melissa Turner.

The \$3,000 contribution will cover program expenses incurred from September 1999 to April 2000, says Turner.

The annual allotment has increased over the years, says Turner, originally starting at approximately \$500.

She attributes the increase in the DSA's contribution to a higher demand for the services.

"The funds go toward recognition activities such as a peer appreciation week and reception," says Turner.

Peer tutors are given a Christmas

reception as recognition for their work.

The \$3,000 also covers the cost of training tutors, manuals and also helps alleviate the cost burden to students wishing to use the department's services.

The funds do not go toward the department's operating expenses, such as staff wages, however.

Peer services also employs a learning skills adviser. The adviser, Shawna Bernard, interviews prospective tutors and handles departmental overflow.

"We don't want the students waiting too long," says Turner.

During the fall semester at Doon campus, over 200 students received peer tutoring, an increase of 16 per cent from the fall of 1998.

Peer services employs over 100 tutors in every major school of study on campus, including nursing, journalism and woodworking.

Conestoga aims high

Asks for \$3.8 million for information technology

By Laura Czekaj

Conestoga College has submitted two proposals, one to the Strategic Skills Investment Fund and another to the Rural Youth Job Strategy Fund, to gain assistance with college infrastructure.

The college requested \$2.6 million from the strategic skills fund in a proposal submitted Feb. 1, and \$1.2 million from the rural youth fund submitted Feb. 8.

College president John Tibbits said the college is trying to become the top information technology college in the province.

"There's a lot more firepower in information technology," he said. "Once we get those proposals we may be clearly the IT (information technology) college in the system."

Money from the strategic skills

fund would go towards improving learning facilities for students at Doon, Waterloo and Guelph campuses.

Tibbits said improvements would include new computer labs. "It would go to upgrading infor-

"There's a lot more firepower in information technology."

*John Tibbits,
Conestoga College
president*

mation technology infrastructure," he said.

The strategic skills fund has \$100 million in its coffers and has been established by the provincial government.

The proposal to the rural youth fund is slightly different from the

strategic skills fund proposal because the college had to match their request with \$1.1 million.

Tibbits said some companies really contributed to the college's endeavour to raise money.

Tibbits said he had originally thought the college wasn't eligible to request assistance from the rural youth fund which is set up by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. However, the college proved to be eligible because Kitchener, Waterloo and Guelph all qualify.

The money will go to developing seven new programs within the next 18 months. The only stipulation with the rural youth fund is that all programs must be made available to students in rural areas.

The college will find out if it receives any funding within the next six weeks.

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Guests \$60

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No. 1 college neglected

Conestoga College will not receive provincial funding for its new campus in Waterloo.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities announced at the University of Waterloo Feb. 24 that Conestoga is not among the 35 colleges and universities to receive money from the \$742-million SuperBuild Growth Fund which offers money to help build, renovate and expand campuses.

Conestoga's proposal requested \$39 million from the fund to contribute to a \$66-million project to build a second Waterloo campus that would make room for 2,750 new students.

Conestoga would be able to move space intensive programs like nursing, information technology and robotics from the Doon campus to the new Waterloo campus to make room for the influx of high school students resulting from the double cohort.

The double cohort will result in 2004 when both Grade 12 and OAC students graduate because of secondary school reform.

Ministry spokesman Dave Ross said the 109 proposals submitted were judged on their ability to meet four criteria.

The first was the number of new student spaces that would be created.

Conestoga College president John Tibbits said he was made aware during a meeting with assistant deputy minister David Trick, on Feb. 29, that the provincial government had developed an additional criterion that no one was told about.

He said approval in this area was gauged by the number of student spaces per million dollars.

Conestoga came extremely close to meeting the criterion in this category. Tibbits said proof of this is that Wilfrid Laurier University received \$12 million from the fund but had a lower number of students per space compared to Conestoga.

The second criterion is the amount of partnership funding.

Tibbits said the college had raised \$26 million from outside sources.

Centennial College, which received funding, had listed more money raised on their proposal. However, in actual fact, Tibbits said, they had released no documentation of financial backing to the government.

Tibbits was told by Trick that proposals had to meet the standards of the first two criteria before moving on to the third criterion, which is the demonstrated student demand for both the institution and the programming to be offered in the new facility.

Being that the fund is named the SuperBuild Growth Fund, Tibbits was surprised that student demand didn't play a more important role in choosing which school would be funded.

When it comes to student demand, Conestoga seems to take the lead because it has the fastest growing application pool among colleges in the province. However, this seemed to mean little to the government because colleges like Cambrian in Sudbury, whose enrolment has been declining over the past three years, was awarded money.

The government recognized Waterloo Region's growth by giving both the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier funding, but even though skilled workers are trained at Conestoga, the college didn't receive a dime.

Ross said UW and WLU received funding because they more closely met the criteria.

"Only the strongest proposals were selected," he said.

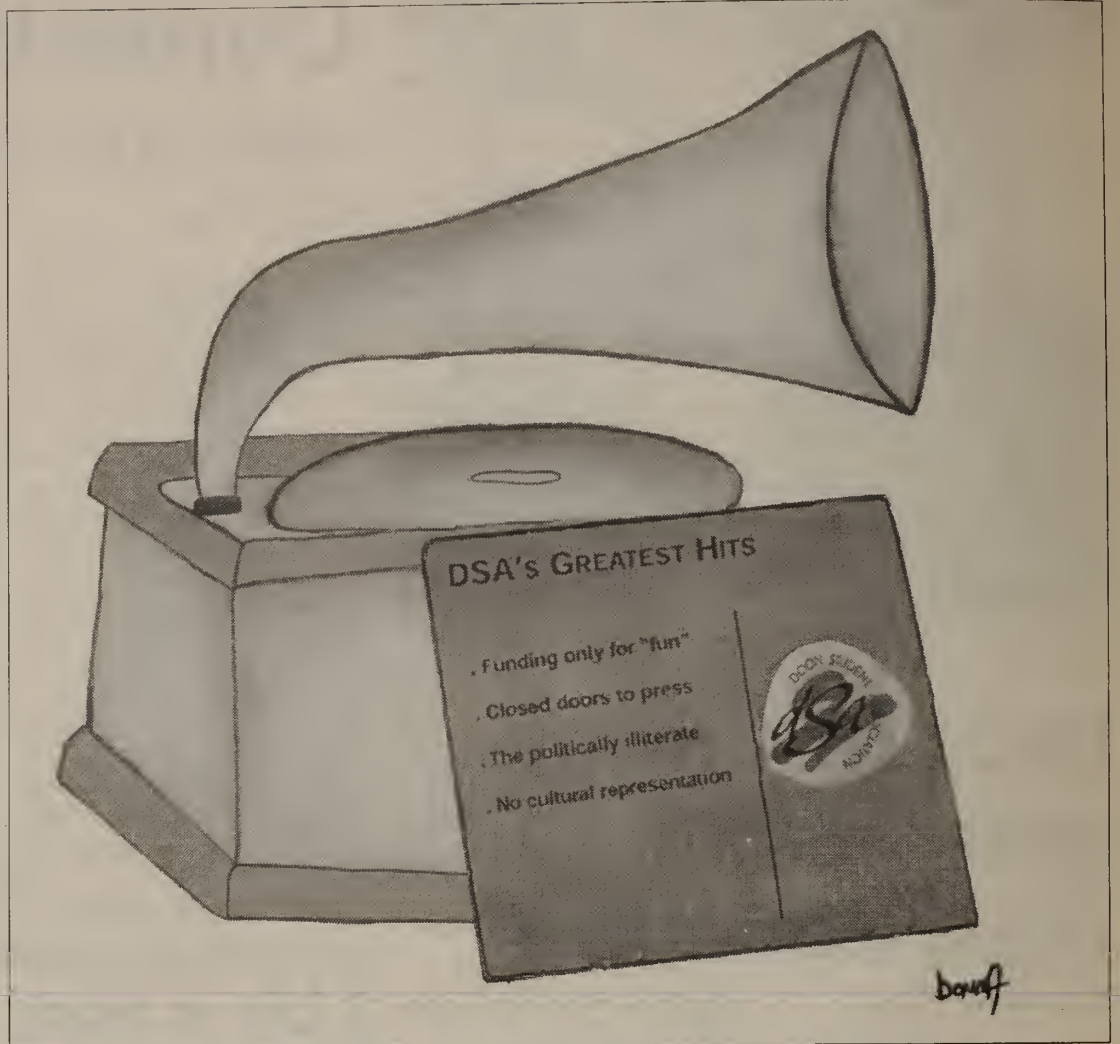
Tibbits believes the system the government used to choose which schools received funding was flawed.

"The explanation we got as to why our proposal didn't succeed only left me more angry," said Tibbits. "It is quite clear that the process is highly flawed."

The final criterion is assessment of the project's contribution to the long-term economic strength of the community or region.

Since the community is currently in dire need of skilled workers, the government's decision not to fund Conestoga is a gross oversight that must be remedied.

These four criteria were all closely met in Conestoga's proposal and the community's need for Conestoga College graduates is immense. The question that arises is why the college which ranks number 1 among all Ontario colleges in student satisfaction, graduate employment and graduate satisfaction failed to receive funding.



Students fume over gas prices

The soaring price of gas is starting to get ridiculous. The government blames it on the oil companies; the oil companies claim it's the government.



The numerous students who drive vehicles to school, such as myself, may be the hardest hit by the skyrocketing price of petrol.

A group of 12 University of Waterloo students decided to show their displeasure on Feb. 29, when they pushed a student's Toyota Camry along University Avenue. At the time, prices were at a measly 73 cents per litre.

Since the mini-protest, the rates are easily pushing 76 cents per litre around Kitchener-Waterloo, with no apparent end in sight.

At the current pace, gas prices could very well spill over a buck a litre by the end of May.

Is that unrealistic or insanely possible?

Could there be another gas crisis like that of the early '70s

when people just left their cars on the side of the road because gas became a luxury item?

I cringe every time I pop the cap off my gas tank, especially as the deep-seeded resentment grows week by week. I know I'm being bamboozled and I don't like it. However, as disheartening as it seems, my occupation does not revolve solely around the price of gas.

Truckers, who undeniably take the biggest hit, are justifiably upset. Their livelihood, and ours for that matter, relies heavily on the price of diesel.

Our lives are extremely influenced by the transfer of goods, such as fruit and vegetables. If truckers decided to strike across the province, a major crisis could naturally come about.

One way to at least try and get the lowest price possible is by checking out the Web site www.gastips.com. The site allows you to click on to the appropriate site map, which includes both southwestern Ontario and the Golden Horseshoe region, and get up-to-date prices.

The tips are posted by average drivers using a message board pin-

pointing the location of each gas bar, its price and the date.

Energy expert Ron Harper said in a Canadian Press article he attributes the recent gas hikes to the price of crude oil. A barrel of crude oil cost \$10.50 US one year ago, as opposed to \$30.50 US at the beginning of March.

There have been suggestions that Premier Mike Harris appoint an impartial ombudsman to oversee escalating gas prices, or the premier introduce legislation to put a freeze on the premiums.

Is it a matter of supply and demand or simple greed?

Oil companies have been known to tweak their prices, sometimes by as much as three or four cents a pop.

They also know that people are basically at the mercy of oil companies to provide them with gas. They can milk the consumer knowing they will pay the high prices.

The only way to deflate prices is to eliminate the demand, and if prices keep hovering higher and higher people may be forced to leave their cars on the side of the street.

Stranger things have happened.

SPOKE

Keeping Conestoga College connected

SPOKE is published and produced weekly by the journalism students of Conestoga College.

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Mental health a concern

By Walerian Czarnecki

Mental health is an issue confronting those in social services.

This was the topic of the panel presentation, Behind the Mask, presented at Social Services Program Day held for Conestoga College students at the Region of Waterloo headquarters in Kitchener on Feb. 17.

Amanda Kroger, co-ordinator of community and mental health and addictions counselling programs at Conestoga College, chaired the panel of five speakers who each brought different perspectives to the presentation.

"We have this forum to learn about emerging issues in the field," said Kroger, who works for the Waterloo regional health department.

The first speaker, Jane Hildreth, a support co-ordinator for Waterloo Regional Homes out of Kitchener and Cambridge and a graduate of Conestoga College, spoke about non-profit housing and support for those with mental health issues.

"We want to encourage people who are recovering from mental health issues to improve their quality of life," said Hildreth.

Many people take for granted that they have a nice place to live, a job to go to and family that will support them in difficult situations, she said.

Hildreth's agency owns nine properties that support 180 people, but housing, even though important, is not the main issue. Many people are trying to rebuild their lives and need support because they might not have family, said Hildreth.

There is 24-hour support for those who face a crisis situation and need to talk to someone who can help them, she said.

"Many don't have the social connections," said Hildreth. "This gives them such support."

The second speaker was Ed Hughes, president of Waterloo Regional Self-Help, who is a survivor of mental illness.

"I consider myself a lucky

consumer in many ways," he said.

Hughes spoke about the many young people, between the ages of 16 and 24, he has seen who've had to deal with mental health issues. "It destroyed their lives," he said.

Hughes had 20 years of experience as a chef and had earned a degree from Carleton University, when, at 40 years of age, his problems began.

Hughes went through three hospitalizations before the right medications could be found that could control his manic-depressions.

"I went back to being a chef, but I was not effective," said Hughes. "It caused me quite a great deal of personal anguish."

Hughes then got involved with the organization Waterloo Regional Homes Services and still does so when he needs support.

In 1991 Hughes got involved with Waterloo Regional Self-Help, where consumers themselves run the organization and support each other. He has been involved for the past nine years.

"We're trying to promote integration of people into the community," said Hughes.

Laurie Robinson, co-ordinator of the partners program at Lutherwood and a part-time teacher at Conestoga College, said there are various programs at Lutherwood Mental Health Services that could benefit people.

Robinson works for a new family-oriented program that allows children with mental illness to be more connected to their family and homes, unlike they were in the past.

The children and their families are seen by a social worker four to five times per week.

Strengths are focused on and built upon so people can improve their lives. There is also a crisis system set up so that someone is available when a client does need someone, said Robinson.

She said there is a connection between mental health and the child's environment, whether it be school, family or counselling centre.

With the permission of the parents, Lutherwood works with everyone connected to the individual's life.

"We're helping families to develop a support system around them that may include formal resources like social workers, psychiatrists, doctors, but more importantly includes people in their lives such as their neighbours, their friends and their family," said Robinson.

Patty McColl, a social worker in residence at Lutherwood, spoke about de-institutionalization of mental health consumers and integration into the community.

Rick Casey, a counsellor with Conestoga's special needs services, brought the parent's perspective to the presentation.

Casey spoke about the experiences of his 18-year-old daughter, who is currently receiving treatment for rapid bi-polar disorder, which is another term for manic-depressive illness at Whitby Mental Health Centre in Whitby.

Casey touched on the various hospitalizations his daughter endured before the right medications were found, as well as the fact she was misdiagnosed, because of the limited resources that social services have due to government cutbacks.

The afternoon session moved to the YMCA Host Refugee Program at Market Square Shopping Centre.

Heather Tebong, co-ordinator of the community psychiatric program at Grand River Hospital, spoke about psychotropic medications and the trends of medication use.

The social services program at Conestoga College organizes this day for both first-and second-year students to offer exposure to a major issue that is current in the social services delivery system every term, said Patrice Butts, a Conestoga faculty member in social services.

"It's really an attempt to bring right into the forefront current issues, in terms of the political process," she said.

IMPORTANT BOD Meeting Wednesday March 15

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Students eat for awareness

By Sherri Osment

About 50 Conestoga students descended on five local restaurants one after another during the DSA Grub Crawl on Feb. 24.

The students paid \$10 each to participate in the crawl. They were transported by bus to the restaurants for all the food they could eat.

The crawl started at the Edelweiss, on the corner of Homer Watson and Manitou in Kitchener and ended at the pub night at Loose Change Louie's, on University in Waterloo. The other

restaurants included Crabby Joe's, Jack Astor's and Kelseys, all on Fairway Road in Kitchener, and East Side Mario's on University in Waterloo.

"Grub crawl is an absolute blast. The DSA does a terrific job of organizing and running this event," said Jr. Farrelly, a second-year marketing student.

"Everywhere we've gone we've found the food to be not only ample enough, but delicious."

Kathy Best, a second-year general business student, said that she was already full while at the third restaurant.

The grub crawl was held as a part of safe-break awareness week, which promotes a safe reading week at Conestoga. The college's reading week was Feb. 28 to March 3.

Phil LeBeau, DSA promotions assistant for awareness weeks, and Kim Kroeker, vice-president of student affairs, organized the crawl.

"Our goal was to promote that you can go out and have fun without drinking," Kroeker said, "or if you do choose to drink that you have an alternative method of getting around."

The DSA also held other activi-

ties to promote safe-break awareness week. The activities included a showing of the movie Dazed and Confused, a trivia game in the Sanctuary and a Nintendo game where participants wore goggles smeared with Vaseline to simulate what vision is like when

drinking and driving. "Mocktails" or non-alcoholic cocktails were served.

Kroeker said that she would definitely recommend doing another grub crawl next year.

"I feel that everyone enjoyed themselves," Kroeker said.



Mike Harris, vice president of education for the DSA (far left) was among the students that participated in the DSA hosted Grub Crawl, Feb. 24.

(Photo by Sherri Osment)



Jr. Farrelly receives a kiss from the staff at Jack Astor's during the Grub Crawl, Feb. 24.

(Photo by Sherri Osment)

Gerry Watson POOL SHOW

Challenge Gerry to a game

11:30am



The Sanctuary

Mon. March 13
Learn new skills

Youth officer conference gets millennium logo

By Donna Ryves

Conestoga College's law and security administration/police foundations program took part in the provincial conference hosted by the Committee of Youth Officers for the Province of Ontario.

It was held at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer.

The conference titled Youth in the New Millennium was held Feb. 15-17. The purpose of the conference was to unite people who work with youth in Ontario to share information and ideas for the betterment of youth.

Don Douglas, LASA/police foundations program coordinator, was one of the advisers and his students were volunteers at the conference.

Heather Bortolussi, program administrator for LASA/police foundations and journalism, contributed by putting together a booklet and brochure for the conference.

The community and social service course in the LASA/police foundations program requires 40 hours of volunteer work for students to pass.

"The conference was a good way

for students to get volunteer hours in," said Douglas.

Students had to submit a memorandum in advance requesting that they be selected. The selection was based on academics and motivation. The students assisted the committee by registering participants and entering data.

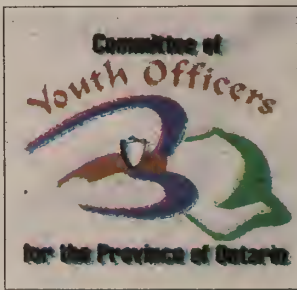
The cost of their stay was covered by the police college. However police officers were charged \$65 and others who attended were charged \$145.

Educators and employees of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and workers in the Ministry of Correctional

Services also attended the conference.

Because the conference was named Youth in the New Millennium, the committee felt a new logo design was needed, said Douglas. He mentioned that Conestoga College had a graphic design program and several students entered their designs.

Alice Vellema, a first-year graphic design student, won the competition and was awarded \$300.





The coast of Cancun, a Mexican city along the Pacific Ocean, is covered with hotels and beaches. Huts are used as beach bars where tourists can get alcohol or food. The area is known for its beautiful white sand and emerald water.

(Photo by Mike Radatus)

Drink on the beach

Cancun's nightlife draws herds of students

By Mike Radatus

Students interested in escaping the cold next spring break should try travelling to the tropical climate of Cancun, Mexico.

Cancun has grown into a haven for tourists over the past 30 years and many are students.

This could be because of the nightlife. The downtown strip is littered with bars that are open all night. At the majority of bars, people can drink all night for \$20 US.

Coco Bongo is the most popular of these nightclubs. At Coco Bongo they have high-wire acts, live impersonations of famous musicians, two large screens showing videos of the songs, confetti falling constantly and an imitation of the movie Cocktail with the bartenders tossing bottles of tequila into the air.

The dance floor is so packed you can't take more than one step before hitting someone.

In another club called Senior Frogs people drink beer by the yard. Patrons are warned that massive yard consumption may enhance the appearance of others and they are not responsible.

They also have drinking competitions to see who can drink Corona the fastest or who can drink the most tequila shots. The loser has to climb a ladder and go down a waterslide leading to the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The water is closed off and only a couple of feet deep.

For those who don't feel like spending all their time at clubs, Cancun offers a variety of other activities.

The Sun Tour takes tourists on a

three-storey boat to different islands near Cancun where they can explore.

People can go snorkeling on the islands or go on mountain bike tours, as well as sit on the beach. A live band entertains on the boat and VHS tapes of the tour are available for \$20 US.

On the Jungle Tour tourists drive their own ski jet through a valley, as they are led on a tour of the island. There they stop to explore

Cancun is more than cheap drinks and sun-kissed beaches.

some ancient pyramids and learn about the vegetation and animal life of Cancun.

There's lots of shopping for tourists who want to buy some gifts, but they need to beware. Vendors will always try to get more money than some of the merchandise is worth.

Never take the first price they offer.

Tourists are advised to offer about 75 per cent of what is asked and then start bargaining.

Job readiness program leads to self-discovery

By Talisha Matheson

The Employment/Training Readiness program (ETR) at Conestoga's Cambridge campus has been a success, according to staff and students.

Dianne Murphy, group facilitator at the Cambridge campus, says the ETR program is for people who are returning to school after a long period of time.

"Some of these people have been out of school for nearly 20 years," Murphy says.

Three things the students learn in the program include how to do self-discoveries through activities, new trends in the workplace and how to search for the proper school suitable for their needs.

The ETR program runs eight weeks with six weeks in class and two weeks on field placement.

"At the end of it all there will be a dozen people going off in different directions," Murphy said.

She said everything that goes on at the campus within the ETR program depends on what the student wants.

Murphy also mentioned the presentation by Carol Walsh, Conestoga's financial aid officer, was well received and helpful.

Walsh spoke to ETR students about financial aid and preparing for it.

She explained the process of applying for OSAP, where to apply for OSAP, how OSAP forms are assessed, money management, bursaries, scholarships and fee deferrals.

Walsh said she gave students several valuable handouts they can look over.

"They also received a handout about the dangers of credit cards, one that we can all put on our refrigerators," Walsh said.

Jason Matthews, a 25-year-old Cambridge student, said through the program he discovered what he wanted to do with his life.

"It's beneficial because it helps people who want to get something out of life," he said.

Matthews said he feels the program enables students to discover themselves and their goals. It helps them realize how they can obtain those goals.

Students finish the program with a certificate, but most of all, they have new skills and know what they want, he said.

Matthews said the hardest part of the program was the self-discoveries.

"I challenge people to make a list of 10 personal skills they know are good about themselves," he said. "I bet they'll have a tough time, but they will learn a whole lot about themselves."

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International students need guidance

By Walerian Czarnecki

Peer Services is looking to recruit more peer hosts for the increasing international student population at Conestoga College. "There are a lot more international students on campus, so there's a greater need, so we are always looking for more volunteers," said Melissa Turner, peer services administrator with student services.

Some students are still waiting to be paired up with a host.

Many of them hear of the program from the international office or have been referred to it by people who have benefited from the program.

Currently, there are 10 peer hosts, down from 13, said Shawna Bernard, learning skills adviser with students services.

"We've had 24 students come in

and ask for a peer host this year," said Bernard. "There are two students who are currently waiting for a good match," she said.

"It's a great way to learn about diversity and other cultures."

*Melissa Turner,
peer services administrator*

More mature student peer hosts

would be beneficial said Turner. "It's a good volunteer experience," she said, adding it only involves one hour a week.

"It's not one where you have to be academically strong," she said.

The program has only been in existence since 1996 but has been growing as the international student population rises.

In the past year, 30 new international students have arrived to add

to the 100 who are already at Conestoga.

Bernard said the peer host program is beneficial for the international students as is the multicultural support group, which formally stopped meeting Feb. 24, but could be extended for the winter semester.

"It also reduces isolation and culture shock for them," she said.

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Death not as scary as public speaking

By Walerian Czarnecki

Two things that are dreaded more than anything else are death and public speaking, with the latter taking first place.

Carol Gregory, co-ordinator of student services, says the D block elective about anxiety awareness is full, with most people taking the public-speaking option this semester.

"We interview for this course to screen for those who actually need help with anxiety," said Gregory. "Those who are just interested in the topic are screened out."

The course starts with 30 students in the class who take two weeks of theory about anxiety, its causes and how to cope with it.

The class then splits into three options - public speaking, performance anxiety and test anxiety.

Too few people chose performance anxiety, but there were enough for the public speaking option.

"We had 20 students for that option," she said, adding it is the hardest one.

Joan Magazine, a counsellor with student services, teaches public speaking, Barb Kraler, a counsellor with student services, teaches anxiety and Gregory teaches the other public speaking option.

The course is split into seven weeks of the option after the theory is complete.

In those seven weeks the class covers core content about thoughts and their impact and how to change negative thoughts. Work is done on physiological responses and the actual content of how to deliver presentations effectively.

"It's a very applied course where students keep a journal on a weekly basis about what they learn and then apply the content to their situation and try to make some changes," said Gregory.

After the two weeks of theory and seven weeks of applied content, the students move into an independent learning project that will involve a change in lifestyle. It has to contain a behavioural change that has been targeted.

There are many strategies that students can use to fight anxiety, whether it is for tests, public speaking or performance anxiety, which is related to co-op placements.

Students incorporate exercise and eating and sleeping patterns, said Gregory.

"It's phenomenal the changes that students go through during this time," she said.

The students, not the teachers, set the goals so they can develop at their own pace, said Gregory.

"The goal is to start small and gradually reach your comfort level," she said.

The key concept taught is a triangle, that all reactions tend to have a behavioural, thought and emotion component to them, said Gregory.

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BURLINGTON • GUELPH • LONDON

OPP officer praises LASA program

By Sherri Osment

Ever since her early high school years, Const. Debra Walker knew she wanted to be a police officer.

At 23, she is now a provincial constable with the North Perth detachment of the OPP. She is also a graduate of Conestoga's law and security administration (LASA) program.

"Everything I knew about policing and how to go about getting a job I learned from Conestoga College, from the law and security program," Walker said.

Walker graduated from the program when she was 19. She then went to the University of Guelph where she earned her BA in sociology.

Walker applied to the OPP in October 1998 and was hired in July 1999. She has been on the road since November.

Walker said the most beneficial part of the LASA program was the focus on how to get a job.

"They're very clear about what police services look for in a recruit," Walker said. "There was so much from that course that I used when I applied."

Part of the process of applying to become a police officer

includes written tests.

"We did sample tests within the (LASA) program which really helped because that gave you an idea of what you were getting yourself into," Walker said.

"Everything I knew about policing and how to go about getting a job I learned from Conestoga College, from the law and security program."

Const. Debra Walker,

OPP

The most interesting part of the LASA program, Walker said, was her field placement. She shadowed a Waterloo regional police officer for two weeks on the job.

"It confirmed my belief that I wanted to be a police officer," she said. "I loved it, I knew this was definitely the job for me."

Now that she's on the job, Walker said that the best part of her job is that it is always different.

"Everything is new every day," Walker said. "No day is the same."

Walker said she finds custody disputes the most difficult part of being a police officer.

"If there's no custody order we can't do anything," Walker said. "The only time we can intervene with a child is if they are in need of protection. It's frustrating because our powers are limited."

Walker said she decided to become a police officer because it is a job with a lot of challenges and opportunities.

Walker's boyfriend, Rod Aitken, said that he's giving her lots of support and is proud of her. He added he does worry about her a little bit when she's on the road at night or in bad weather.

"I'm pretty excited," Aitken said. "It's a neat career. It will be full of lots of challenges for her so it's a great undertaking."

Every step she has taken since high school has been toward the goal of becoming a police officer, Walker said.

"I have the best job in the world," she said. "I just hope I can still say that in 15 or 20 years."



Const. Debra Walker dons the uniform she's worked to achieve since high school.

(Photo by Sherri Osment)

Condors soar at regionals

By Sherri Osment

The Conestoga men's indoor soccer team will be in the Ontario Colleges Athletic Association championships after going undefeated during the OCAA regional qualifying games. The Condors won three games and tied one at Centennial College on March 3 and 4.

Conestoga got off to a good start on March 3, when they trounced Confederation College 10-0. Conestoga's next game gave them their second victory of the day when they won against Centennial College by a score of 4-2.

March 4 they won 4-2 over Canadore and tied Seneca 2-2.

The Conestoga women's team played to a scoreless tie against Seneca, March 3 in their first game of the tournament. They followed this with a 4-0 win over Canadore.

The Condors won again with a score of 1-0 against Centennial, March 4 but ended by losing 2-1 to George Brown.

The women's team was eliminated and will not be playing in the championships.

The OCAA championship games will be held at the Conestoga College rec centre on March 17 and 18.

Second effort couldn't save Condors

By Sherri Osment

The men's Conestoga College indoor soccer league game on Feb. 24 ended in a 4-3 Condor loss to the Country Boy Freestylers.

Despite the Condors' efforts, Country Boy led 3-0 at the half.

The second half saw the Condors make a comeback with two goals scored within a minute.

The Condors' first goal was scored by Zlatko Lakoseljic and was followed almost immediately by a goal from Derhan Sherifali.

The third Condor goal was also scored by Sherifali. He got the ball and without turning to face the net, scored with a backward kick.

However, Country Boy managed to get the ball past Condor goalie John Abramovic one last time, giving Country Boy the 4-3 win.

Condors assistant coach, Sanjeev Dhanapala, said the one-on-one defence has to improve if the Condors want to get any further in the game.

"We can't rely on the goalie to keep bailing us out like Johnny did today," Dhanapala said. "He made some awesome saves."

Condor Terry Lopes injured an ankle toward the end of the second half. Dhanapala said Lopes aggravated an existing injury.

"He went over on the same ankle he's hurt before," Dhanapala said.

Condors assistant coach, Dwayne Shadd, said that Lopes's ankle was slightly swollen, but it looked like it was only a sprain.



Condor Bojan Djokovic takes the ball around one of the Country Boys during an indoor soccer game Feb. 24.

(Photo by Sherri Osment)

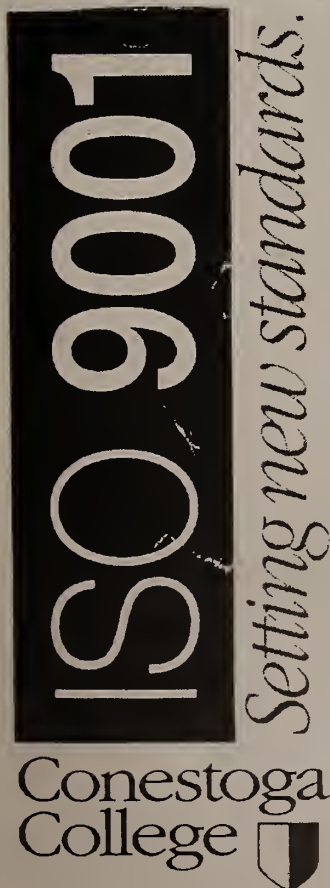
COUNSELLOR'S CORNER: GRIEF

You can't stop crying. You feel angry. You feel numb. These feelings are all normal reactions to loss in our lives — a reaction we call grief. Grief does not only have to be a result of losing a loved one to death. We grieve any kind of loss: the breakup of a relationship, the loss of good health or even the loss of a dream to reach a certain goal. Although these feelings are natural, it sometimes helps to talk them over with a counsellor as part of the healing process. Writing your thoughts in a journal, reading books about grief, and talking to friends can also help. Most of all, give yourself permission to grieve. Feelings left bottled up will only come out later, delaying the healing process.

If you have a friend who is grieving, don't worry about saying the wrong thing to them. Just be there, be a good listener or remind them how much you care with a card, a hug or some time together.

A Message from Student Services (Room 2B02)

Thank you for your support ISO Team Student Services



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Jack Fletcher
Carol Gragory
Lynn Rpberts
Barb Kraler
Joan Magazine
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Elaine Brunk
Jeanette Walker
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